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Debt Management Services Welcomes New Assistant Commissioner



Scott Johnson, Assistant Commissioner, DMS

On January 12, 2009, Scott H. Johnson was appointed as the Assistant Commissioner for Debt Management Services (DMS) at the Financial Management Service (FMS), U.S. Department of the Treasury. In this position, he is responsible for the collection of delinquent debts owed to the federal government.

Prior to this appointment, Scott served ten years as the Assistant Commissioner for Management and Chief Financial Officer at the Financial Management Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury.

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FMS Selects U.S. Bank as Financial Agent for CCMM's New Credit Gateway

By Randolph Maxwell, Settlement Services Division

After months of analysis and evaluation, FMS is pleased to announce that on April 2, 2009, U.S. Bank was selected as the Financial Agent for the Collection and Cash Management Modernization's (CCMM) new Credit Gateway. U.S. Bank is the 6th largest commercial bank in the United States and brings a vast amount of experience in electronic payment processing.

The Financial Agent Selection Process (FASP) was conducted pursuant to FMS's CCMM enterprise architecture initiative to streamline,

modernize, and improve the systems, services and processes supporting Treasury collections and cash management programs.

Current Fedwire and Automated Clearing House (ACH) credit payment processing is fragmented across multiple systems and does not provide a consolidated real time view of detail transaction information. These deficiencies hinder timely payment reconciliation and decision making for forecasting and investments.

(Continued on page 4)



CMS and USPS Join NTDO Vendor Payment Program

By Debt Management Services, Debt Program Division

In its continued effort to recover delinquent tax and non-tax debts, the Financial Management Service (FMS), Debt Management Services (DMS) offers Non-Treasury Disbursing Office (NTDO) agencies the ability to collect debts through its NTDO Vendor Payment program. The NTDO process allows for the offset and/or levy of supplier payments issued by payment disbursing agencies to collect delinquent tax and non-tax debts. Here are two agencies' stories:

The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS)

CMS began participation in the NTDO Vendor Payment program to fulfill its obligation to levy monies owed to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for tax debts owed by Medicare providers. They underwent a five-month period of extensive testing, involving various scenarios with the electronic exchange of files through Connect:Direct. CMS transitioned into production by phasing in two contractors to serve as "pilots", meeting the established October 6, 2008

target date for program implementation.

After program startup, additional contractors transitioned into production. FMS now interfaces with a total of 20 CMS contractors utilizing the Healthcare Integrated General Ledger Accounting System (HIGLAS). More contractors will be added in the future, with files processed and returned to CMS on a daily basis. As of May 19, CMS levied \$25,718,696.62.

In addition to levying tax debts owed to IRS, legislation was passed in August 2008 that allows CMS to collect non-tax debts by offsetting Medicare payments owed to health care providers. The target date for implementation is FY2010.

The United States Postal Service (USPS)

FMS has been working with USPS to bring their NTDO vendor payments into the Treasury Offset Program. A Service Level Agreement between FMS and USPS was entered into and signed by

the Assistant Commissioner of DMS on December 3, 2008. In early 2009, USPS' s system requirements, design, and development began.

Currently, the Debt Program Support Branch is conducting various tests of the batch file process with USPS and its contractor staff in support of this effort. FMS expects to complete the Customer Acceptance Test phase of the project plan and have USPS fully participating in the NTDO program by June 30, 2009.

Other agencies currently participating in the NTDO Vendor program include the Army Corps of Engineers and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

For further information regarding the NTDO Vendor program, please contact Debt Management Services, Debt Program Relations Branch on (202) 874-0540.

Administrative Wage Garnishment—What's New for 2009

By Birmingham Debt Management Operations Center

The Department of the Treasury, Financial Management Service (FMS), through its Cross-Servicing Program, can assist agencies in collecting delinquent debt by Administrative Wage Garnishment (AWG).

As authorized by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (DCIA) (codified at 31 U.S.C. § 3720D), AWG allows federal agencies to garnish up to 15 percent of disposable pay of debtors who do not work for the federal government. It also allows debtors the option to pay their debts rather than be garnished by the Department of Treasury—a good negotiating tool for agencies.

Federal agencies that choose to use AWG must request their agency profiles be updated to participate in AWG. Before modifying their profiles, agencies must either adopt Treasury rules regarding hearing procedures, or they may prescribe their own regulations for the conduct of AWG hearings consistent

with Treasury rules pursuant to 31 C.F.R. § 285.11(f).

Previously, AWG was only available for Consumer debts, as of March 2009, AWG also became available for Commercial debts with individual liability. This will increase the currently eligible debt for AWG by over \$300 million.

Over the past year, many additional agencies have become active in AWG: Department of Agriculture, Small Business Administration, Department of Interior, State Department, CIA, Presidio Trust, and within the next few months, Department of Transportation. There are currently 22 active AWG agencies, 14 of those being CFO agencies. FMS is committed to assisting federal agencies with AWG implementation to ensure government-wide participation.

FMS will also be implementing use of the Department of Health and Human

Service's National Directory for New Hires (NDNH) to locate employer information for delinquent debtors. This tool will further improve FMS's ability to locate additional employers for AWG orders, thus increasing collections. NDNH was implemented in May 2009.

Collections through the use of AWG have been very successful for the participating federal program agencies. From FY01 through February 2009, the AWG program has collected over \$27.8 million dollars of delinquent debt. This does not include debts voluntarily collected as the result of an AWG notice. AWG has proven to be a very effective collection tool.

Treasury's rules governing AWG may be found on the FMS website at: www.fms.treas.gov/debt/awg/html To request a meeting to discuss participation in AWG, please contact Debbie Davenport at 202-874-6653.



DMS Welcomes New Assistant Commissioner, Scott Johnson

(Continued from page 1)

In this position, he was responsible for providing direction and leadership for the FMS's administrative and financial programs, ensuring that policies developed and implemented for resource management conform with federal and Departmental regulatory requirements. He also provided legislative coordination, support and advice to FMS management officials in developing and fully utilizing resources, materials, and funds to meet goals and objectives.

Previously, Scott was also the Director of the Business Management Division in the Office of the Assistant Commissioner for DMS. He was responsible for directing management and support functions to help agencies receive the necessary assistance to remain in compliance with the Debt Collection Improvement Act (DCIA) of 1996. In addition to other duties, Scott was involved in directing policy-making on debt collection policy practices with the Department, Office of Management and Budget, Congress and other government agencies.

Prior to joining DMS in January 1998, Scott was the Director of the Program Integrity Division, Comptroller Directorate in the Office of the Assistant Commissioner for Management. He was responsible for FMS security programs, internal control, internal audit, and implementation of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). In addition, he had the responsibility for development and management of Strategic and Operational Planning.

Scott joined FMS in November 1991 as the Manager of the Security Branch, Program Review Division. He was responsible for the Security Program and Oversight, Physical and Personnel Security and Emergency Preparedness. Prior to that, he served as Chief of the Overseas Security Operations Branch, and Special Agent of the Defense Intelligence Agency from 1984 to 1991. From 1980 to 1984, Scott served in the U.S. Army as a counterintelligence officer, rising to the rank of captain.

Scott holds a bachelor's of science degree in finance and commerce, which he received in 1980 from Georgetown University. Additionally, he also holds a master's degree in government, which he received in 1993, also from Georgetown University.

The Debt Business – A Thriving Organization

Scott has enthusiastically taken over the helm of DMS and already in his brief tenure there has begun to stamp his imprint on the organization. Under his leadership, DMS continues to fine-tune their business to look for opportunities to enhance the Treasury Offset Program and Cross-Servicing, which will lead to improved debt collection. Overall, the debt collection



business is very successful. In FY2008 alone, DMS collected \$5.9 billion from all collection tools.

Among the initiatives being addressed in DMS under Scott's leadership are: movement of the Debt Management Operations Center to a new facility; an increasingly more pro-active debt collection role for DMS collectors; a review of debt collection policy options available to DMS and creditor agencies; documentation of debt collection roles and responsibilities among DMS components; development of a new model to capture debt collection costs with a view toward informing DMS' fee structure; and creation of a comprehensive mechanism outlining the roles and responsibilities of DMS and the suppliers that provide services to the debt collection effort.

DMS has been very effective at collecting delinquent debt over the past few years with both the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) and Cross-

Servicing having record collections last year. Collections so far this fiscal year are on pace to be even higher. DMS has plans to continue to improve its debt collection systems, in order to better serve agencies. In 2005, DMS first implemented web-based access to our Cross-Servicing system, FedDebt. Last year, DMS implemented the web- client access to the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) system and implemented the new DMS accounting system called the Financial Accounting Collections Disbursement and Reconciliation (FACDR). While providing web-based access for agencies to our systems is important, DMS believes that there are a number of additional projects that will improve the debt collection process and increase overall government-wide collections.

In FY 2009, DMS will be receiving wage and employment information from the Department of Health and Human Services' New Hire Database. This will increase collections for Administrative Wage Garnishment (AWG) but only for those agencies that have authorized DMS to utilize AWG. It is imperative that agencies authorize DMS to use AWG or there is a possible loss of additional collections.

In the fall of 2009, DMS will begin a project to update the technology behind the Treasury Offset Program. This multiyear project will allow TOP to utilize better technology that will increase processing time for matching federal payments against the delinquent debts in TOP, improve the loading and updating of debts in TOP, and allow DMS to better manage the over \$300 billion of debts referred to TOP. Going forward DMS will be implementing a Data Mart to provide DMS and agencies with better analytics to improve the overall debt collection process. In addition to these major projects, DMS has begun prioritizing future projects that will improve the manual processes that still exist in the debt collection process related to handling debtor disputes, requests for additional debt documentation, and other paper intensive activities.

For more information, visit DMS online at www.fms.treas.gov/debt.



FMS Selects Financial Agent for CCMM's New Credit Gateway

By Randolph Maxwell, Settlement Services Division

(Continued from page 1)

The Credit Gateway will be operated through the Financial Agent which will process Government transactions on its infrastructure using its own commercial gateway application. The Gateway will function separately from all collection channels. Though the Gateway will be operated by U.S. Bank, funds will settle directly to one or more accounts by a Federal Reserve Bank. The concept of separating collection channels from settlement mechanisms is a cornerstone of the enterprise architecture for CCMM collections. It represents a fundamental change and is designed to avoid duplication of systems and banks by allowing for one system for Fedwire and ACH credit payments. This approach is designed to avoid duplicate connections to third-party services and applications that are not modular and are, therefore, difficult to maintain and change. This approach should also allow for more flexibility with respect to the selection of financial/fiscal agents

without directly disrupting customer federal agencies. As payments are processed in the Gateway, detail transaction information will be sent real time to FMS reporting systems: CA\$HLINK II in the interim; and ultimately to the Transaction Reporting System (TRS). Agencies will continue to access their transaction data from FMS reporting systems. The Gateway will also send real time transaction data to the channel applications as needed. Data interfaces from the Gateway to reporting systems and channel applications will utilize the FMS's XML standard format.

Some of the benefits of the new Credit Gateway include:

- Improved processing efficiencies and streamlined application support
- Improved cash forecasting and decision-making by providing real time access to collection information.
- Reduced costs through the decommissioning of legacy applications

- Use of the new Gateway to protect the channel programs from proprietary file formats and to make it easier to replace settlement providers when necessary.

The selection of U.S. Bank sets in motion a project that will consist of multiple phases, over the course of two years. Current legacy system payments will be migrated, one at a time, to the new Gateway. The first migration will include the Fedwire Deposit System (FDS) and the Remittance Express (REX) applications. The next migration will include the Federal Reserve Electronic Tax Application (FR-ETA) and electronic lockboxes from the General Lockbox Network (GLN). The final migration will include ACH credit payments associated with the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS). FMS will make every attempt to minimize impacts to agencies and external customers.

For more information on the Credit Gateway, please contact Randolph Maxwell at 202-874-3720.

PM Names Walt Henderson Director of Resource Management



Payment Management (PM) recently announced the selection of Walt Henderson as the Director of their Resource Management Division. Walt has worked at FMS for over 22 years. His most recent position was as the executive assistant to the Assistant Commissioner, Payment Management and Chief Disbursing Officer. FMS disburses nearly one billion electronic funds transfer (EFT) and check payments each year for the federal government.

Prior to that, Walt held positions within Federal Finance in the areas of cash management,

marketing, policy analysis, and application development. He has represented the Treasury as a liaison to the National Automated Clearing House (NACHA), as well as served on NACHA's Accredited ACH Professional (AAP) Blue Ribbon Panel, Rules and Operations Committee, Electronic Check Council, and various rules work groups.

In his new position, Walt will be responsible for the management of PM's budget, consumable ordering, contracts for check production and postage.



TOP Readies for Economic Recovery Payments

Birmingham Debt Management Operations Center

The 2009 tax season is coming to an end and the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) Call Center is now making preparations for the upcoming Economic Recovery Payments to begin in May. Each year the Call Center receives millions of calls and this is now the eleventh year of operations. The Call Center received approximately 4.3 million calls in 2008, with two thirds of the total calls being received during the busiest time of the year, which is tax season. During the 2008 tax season, from January 1, 2008 through April 15, 2008, the TOP Call Center received 2,848,573 as compared to 2,714,387 for the same period during the 2007 tax season. The remaining 1,455,060 for 2008 were received between April 16 and the end of the year. Answering thousands of calls is a challenge that FMS meets daily with well trained staff, terrific technical support and automation.

The Financial Management Service created TOP in response to provisions of the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (DCIA). TOP utilizes the FMS centralized disbursement process by matching a database of delinquent debts owed to various Government and State agencies against payments

to be made by the Government. When TOP matches a delinquent debtor record to a payment being issued, the payment is intercepted and applied to the debt. Each time a payment is offset to help satisfy a debt, the payee receives an offset notice from FMS providing information about the offset,



along with the creditor agency address and phone number(s). Each notice also contains the toll-free TOP Call Center number 1-800-304-3107 as the secondary point of contact.

The TOP Call Center responds to inquiries from the public and from agencies concerning Federal payments that have been offset or scheduled to

be offset. The traditional types of questions received are "will I be offset?" or "who took my money?" As callers may be upset about the collection of their debts through the offset program, the Call Center staff is specifically trained to handle each call with professionalism so that each caller receives accurate information as quickly as possible.

The TOP Call Center has improved customer service to taxpayers with an expansion of its Interactive Voice Response (IVR) capability. The IVR system gives taxpayers around the clock access to answer many of their offset questions. The popularity of self service using the IVR has increased every year since its implementation in December 2000. In 2008, 90 percent of callers choose the self-service IVR option.

The Treasury Offset Call Center may be reached at 1-800-304-3107. Normal business hours are Monday through Friday 7:30AM to 5:00PM Central time. Calls are answered in both English and Spanish languages. The IVR automated system is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

PCAs: The Benefits of Outsourcing Debt Collection in Government

By Debt Management Services, Private Collection Division

Financial Management Service (FMS) continues to reap the benefits of maintaining contracts with Private Collection Agencies (PCAs) in order to collect and resolve delinquent federal debt. Since 1998, FMS has worked with PCAs to utilize their expertise in locating debtors, establishing payment agreements, and administratively resolving debts. In 2001, FMS expanded the collection tools available under this contract to include administrative wage garnishment. Administrative wage garnishment allows federal agencies, and the designated PCAs under contract with FMS, to garnish the wages of a private sector individual without the issuance of a

court order. The addition of administrative wage garnishment to FMS's collection program has increased collections and benefited the federal government. The PCAs have collected \$27 million as a result of administrative wage garnishment since the collection tool was introduced.

Over the ten-year time period that FMS has been utilizing PCAs, FMS has continued to improve the PCA contract to provide better services to the Federal Program Agencies (FPA) and to create incentives for PCA performance. FMS has worked on more effective ways to distribute debts to PCAs, added incentives for resolving

debts, added a new category for resolving debts, and improved how PCAs are evaluated. These changes have led to improved service and competition among the PCAs. These continuous contract improvements spur higher collections and have been an effective way in maximizing the expertise of private sector contractors.

In March 2007, FMS announced the award of its third debt collection contract. The five contractors selected were: Diversified Collection Services, Inc. in Lathrop, CA; Linebarger, Goggan, Blair & Sampson, LLP in Houston, TX; Pioneer Credit Recovery, Inc. in Arcade, NY; *(Continued on page 7)*



FMS Stresses Strong Security in Data and Applications

By Mission Assurance Division, Information Resources

In the January/February issue of *The Financial Connection*, then-Commissioner Judith Tillman listed one of FMS's overarching priorities as to "maintain strong security to include security of people, data, dollars, and physical locations."

That's not just lip service with trendy buzz words; it's a clear commitment by FMS to its customers to build secure systems. FMS commits fully to

The FMS governance process has evolved nicely over recent years and now represents a thoughtful, thorough, disciplined mechanism that carefully watches for smart use of taxpayer dollars, efficiency of projects, assurance that all the right bases are touched as a project progresses, and that security is "baked into" the FMS governance process. Here is a brief overview of key components of the process:

and enforcing both enterprise architecture and individual program architectures, considering such security-related details as the technical architecture, application interfaces, telecommunications impact analysis, and a security impact analysis;

- **The Entity-wide Configuration Control Board (ECCB)** assesses the readiness of new releases of applications and infrastructures, to include security, Certification and Accreditation (C&A), and Help Desk readiness;

- **C&A, Federal Information System Management Act (FISMA)** reporting, and various third-party audits all help to ensure sufficiently robust controls in FMS systems;

- **The Java Code Library** is a new mechanism that allows developers to search for and re-use code prior to beginning a development cycle; it stores code, supporting documentation, and testing artifacts for re-use of "tried and true", vetted components.

At FMS, the establishment of security policy is accomplished by the DIO Policy Subcommittee, which pulls membership from all business areas, with subject matter experts brought in to review and advise as needed. This broad participation helps to ensure that all business, risk, and strategic considerations are "baked in" from the start. The wide spectrum of opinion and perspective helps to craft a policy that is both responsive to business needs and relevant mandates, but also adequately addresses real world threats.



- **The Executive Board** consists of the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and all Assistant Commissioners (security is a constant focus);

- **The Division Information Officer Council (DIOC)** consists of the Chief and Deputy Chief Information Officers (CIO and DCIO) and the Division Information Officers from each of the Assistant Commissioner Areas ("operating centers" or "business lines") and focuses generally on FMS investments, business line architecture, and policy, including security-related details and governance, Technical Reference Model compliance, software development methodology, and risk management. The DIOC has a **DIO Policy Subcommittee** that focuses on policy development (more on this subcommittee subsequently);

crafting policy that is responsive to both business needs and security concerns. That commitment is evidenced in the FMS governance process and delivered applications; is demonstrated in the constraints and opportunities of software development; and starts with a thoughtful, disciplined, holistic process to developing security policy.

Before delving a bit into the FMS process for security policy development, it's important to recognize several other significant efforts that reflect the various ways that FMS secures the data stored and the applications built, to include the disciplined governance process and a new library of re-usable Java code.

- **The Architecture Review Board (ARB)** consists of the Deputy CIO, Chief Architect, and the Division Information Officers, and focuses generally on defining

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FMS Stresses Strong Security

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Resultant policy benefits greatly from the wide and diverse range of business perspective and technical subject matter expertise brought by the various Subcommittee members and invited guest contributors. The value of having this vitally important group populated from business areas across the agency, as well as, subject matter experts from such areas as Threat Management, Platform Engineering, Mission Assurance, and Network/Telecommunications Engineering cannot be over-stated: it is this wide and broad collective perspective that helps to ensure properly focused, sufficiently robust policy that enables successful solutions that address the core FMS and agency business needs.

Whether the DIO Policy Subcommittee incorporates mandates and guidance from Treasury, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), or other government authorities, addresses changing real-world threats, or defines/refines policy to better meet business needs, its formulation of security policy ensures a comprehensive security program throughout FMS and throughout the applications that FMS builds and maintains for our customers' use.

When we speak of "policy", we are actually referring to three types of documents: policy, standards, and procedures. The FMS Entity-wide Information Technology (IT) Security Policy Manual provides the high-level core principles that establish the foundation for the FMS IT Security Program. The FMS IT Security Standards Manual provides additional guidance for implementing the policies.

Standards are mandatory and serve as the basis for the development and implementation of IT security procedures. Procedures document the activities and tasks developed to execute the standards and the assignment of the responsibilities at the individual level.

It is likely that in the near future, FMS will take a new look at the policies related to Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), multi-factor authentication, and identity management federation. Mandates such as these may require new or modified policy, and that, of course, may spawn new standards and procedures as well. It looks like the DIO Policy Subcommittee may be busy for some time to come enhancing data security for FMS, other federal agencies, citizens, financial institutions and other customers.

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FMS issues bi-monthly financial news through the Financial Connection to:

- federal agencies
- financial institutions
- ACH associations
- advocacy groups and others

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PCAs: The Benefits

(Continued from page 5)

Progressive Financial Services, Inc. in Tempe, AZ; and, The CBE Group, Inc. in Waterloo, IA. Under this new contract, the PCAs have risen to the challenge and produced outstanding results. In February 2009, these five collection agencies collected the highest monthly collection amount on record for the life of the project, and then broke that record in March 2009. In each month, these PCAs collected over \$10 million in billable collections. In Fiscal Year 2008, these PCAs also posted the highest amount collected during a fiscal year since the beginning of the project, with a total of nearly \$69 million collected.

By outsourcing debt collection services to PCAs and improving the contract, based upon experience and collection information, FMS has increased the benefits of the PCA contract and the PCAs have produced amazing results. FMS anticipates that the increase in PCA collections will continue as more federal agencies authorize administrative wage garnishment for their programs. For additional information regarding FMS's PCA contract, please contact Anita Triantafilledes, Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), at (202) 874-7208.





DSSB Innovates with Pay.gov, IVAULT and New Truncation Process

By Birmingham Debt Management Operations Center

The Debt Services Support Branch (DSSB) at Birmingham Debt Management Operations Center (BDMOC) has been busy integrating new processes to eliminate paper and to increase debt collections. Within the last year DSSB has implemented the use of Pay.gov, IVAULT, and a new lockbox truncation process using FMS's Electronic Check Presentment (ECP) with financial agent (FA) Wachovia Bank.

Pay.gov is used to collect secure electronic payments from debtors. Payments can be made directly from a bank account or by credit/debit card. DSSB started using Pay.gov in April 2008. Collection Specialists take credit card and bank account information over the phone while

they still have the debtor on the line. This allows debts to be paid immediately. Since inception, 13,644 payments have been processed totaling \$5,624,025. The use of Pay.gov has assisted in record dollar increases for debt collection.

The IVAULT system is used to retrieve Medicare Secondary Payments documentation. This system is an imaging system that stores all the records electronically. Prior to DSSB gaining access to this system, DSSB had to store all the paperwork. Currently, with this new process, DSSB accesses just the IVAULT system to send the information to an in house storage system, IDMS, or to send the information to the requesting customer on a compact disc (CD).

This new process has been more cost efficient to FMS.

DSSB switched to a paperless environment using ECP lockbox operations to truncate checks. Instead of DSSB receiving the daily check copies, FA Wachovia Bank will keep them for 30 days and then destroy them. This information is imaged in the ECP system upon receipt by Wachovia Bank. DSSB eliminated the need to receive this paper and the paperwork can currently be accessed on line through ECP.

DSSB has been working very hard to increase collections and reduce paper. We are constantly looking at ways to make our work more efficient and cost effective.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SFC Agency Forum

July 14-15, 2009

Lakewood, CO (Denver)

www.fms.treas.gov/sfc

Contact: Michelle LaCome

510-594-7327

2009 Year-End Closing Seminar

August 3, 2009

Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center
Washington, D.C.

www.fms.treas.gov/tas/conference/seminar.html



19th Annual Government Financial Management Conference

August 4-5, 2009

Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center
Washington, D.C.

www.fms.treas.gov/tas/conference/annconf.html

Debt Management Services Workshops

July 21-23, 2009

Chicago, IL

Debt Collection 101 - July 21

Treasury Report on Receivables (TROR) and FEDDebt - July 22

TOP Web Client (TWC) - July 23

All Federal Program Agencies may participate. Contact 202-874-8580 for more information.